**SEEKING RESOURCES TO COMPILe EMPLOYER RESEARCH**

Carefully researching an employer can mean the difference between knowing enough to apply and knowing enough to actually lock down a job.

Employer research can usually be achieved through highly-accessible, low-cost resources. The time you take to study your dream job will be time well invested.

When conducting employer research, areas of possible interest are:

- Company overview
- Employer image
- Types of people
- Locations
- Professional development
- Web resources

Researching the employers for whom you most want to work will enable you to tailor your resume to fit their needs and to be more knowledgeable during your interview.

The time you put into researching employers will truly pay off in the end!

**WHY SEEK INFORMATION ABOUT PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS?**

**Q:** What is “employer research”?

**A:** Employer research is the process of obtaining information on prospective employers, which can be used to determine which job would best fit you.

**Increase your marketability**

Research will enhance your marketability to potential employers. Research exemplifies your interest in and enthusiasm toward an organization by showing the employer that you are knowledgeable about his/her organization. One of the top complaints among employers is that recent graduates have not adequately prepared themselves for the job search.

In addition to helping you make a good first impression, researching employers enables you to create better cover letters and resumes to target specific positions within an organization, as well as better preparing you for the interview.

**Make an informed decision**

You may research employers to locate positions related to a particular type of work, industry, or geographic location. This research can aid you in the process of narrowing and selecting a future career.

**FACTS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT EMPLOYERS**

It is important to first establish what information you will want to know about a potential employer. Your research will provide an overview of the organization and include valuable information regarding: products and services offered, financial health, plans for future growth, potential career path options, employee training, and many other areas.

The information obtained through research will be useful in helping you decide whether to accept a position.

The following list will help you organize information that will be useful to have at your disposal during the interview.
CHECKLIST OF FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT ORGANIZATIONS

Company Overview

_ What does the company do? What products and services do they provide?
_ What is the size of the organization (number of employees)?
_ How is the company’s current financial health?
_ What is the anticipated growth? Are there any expansion plans?
_ How is the organization structured (management)?

Employer Image

_ What is the organization’s national and local reputation in the market?
_ What awards or recognitions has it received?
_ What is its relationship to competitors?
_ With what associations is it actively involved?
_ What is its sales growth over the last five years?

People

_ What are the credentials/qualifications of the top executives?
_ What is the organizational culture/working environment like?

Locations

_ Where is the corporate headquarters located?
_ Where are branches, subsidiaries, stores, satellite offices, etc. located?

Professional Development

_ What type of training programs are offered to employees?
_ What is the typical promotional path?
_ What is the typical career path in the field compared to that in the company?
_ What benefits are offered?
_ How are employees reviewed or evaluated?

ORGANIZING YOUR DATA

What To Do With The Information You Gathered

Locating potential employers can be a time consuming process. Therefore, it is imperative that you start your employer search early. Some information may not be available through printed information and you may need to set up informational interviews, make phone calls, or search the Internet for answers.

As you begin gathering information on employers, you will want to keep your facts organized. Maintaining a file for each employer will make preparing for the interview easier by preventing information from running together. You may want to compile a summary sheet of recorded, and relevant facts.

OBTAINING EMPLOYER INFORMATION ONLINE

Use the following Internet sites to seek out employers’ websites, to find and analyze information about a company, or to develop a list of employers for your job search.

General Company Searches

[www.acinet.org](http://www.acinet.org) (America’s Career Info Net)
Search employers by name, industry and location. This site also provides useful career information such as wages and trends, occupational outlooks, and skills necessary for chosen occupations.

[www.bu.edu/library/guides/pml/tenkay.html](http://www.bu.edu/library/guides/pml/tenkay.html)
Library of public company annuals and financial reports.

[www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com) (Hoovers Online)
Provides a master list of 10,000+ companies with direct links to their corporate websites, SEC filings, and other company information. Also includes job listings.

[www.vaultreports.com](http://www.vaultreports.com) (Access through Jobs4Cats)
Insider guides to companies, including many anonymous interviews with current and past employees to find out “what it’s really like in there.”
www.wetfeet.com
Research companies, careers, industries, city profiles. Provides list of insider guides to companies for purchase.

www.wsrn.com/ (Wall Street Research Net)
Click on “researching a company” to find links to companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange, NASDAQ, and the OTC Bulletin Board.

www.advfn.com/amex/americanstockexchange.asp
Links to companies listed on the American Stock Exchange, New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ are available.

Top Company Listings

www.money.cnn.com (Fortune 500)
List of all the Fortune top companies including: America’s largest corporations, world’s largest corporations, America’s most admired companies, world’s most admired companies, America’s best companies for minorities, and 100 fastest growing companies.

www.forbes.com (Forbes)
Search America’s largest corporations by sales, profits, assets and market value.

www.sba8a.com/
Searchable directory of minority and women-owned businesses. Search by industry and/or state.

SEEKING EMPLOYER INFORMATION THROUGH PUBLICATIONS

General Resources

Directories
Available at local libraries. These publications provide information about an organization’s products or services, the number of employees, principal executives, and locations. Other information might include revenues generated, major clients, and descriptions of subsidiaries.

Informational Interviews
You can meet with an employee willing to provide you with information about their particular organization. Because the informational interview is not a formal job interview, the tone is more low-key—a more relaxed request for facts, (see the Texas State Career Services handout, “Preparing to Conduct an Informational Interview” for further details).

University Library
Texas State University’s Alkek Library provides a multitude of resources related to employer research. Contact Reference Information at 245-2685 to speak with a Reference Librarian regarding the best periodicals and books for your purposes.

Career Services Library
Texas State Career Services provides students and alumni with a wide range of career resources including information directly related to employers whether regional, statewide, national, or international. Each of the eight stations in our computer lab includes a database detailing the major employers, category by category, for Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas. Another section of the library highlights company profiles, and is arranged according to occupational area. Another section provides insight into seeking employment overseas.

References: www.careers.fsu.edu and
The First Job Hunt Survival Guide (Morton & Fox, Eds.)
**INCORPORATING YOUR FINDINGS INTO THE INTERVIEW**

Simply being informed about an employer does not guarantee a successful interview unless you use that information effectively. Knowledge of products and opportunities is only helpful if you know how to tactfully weave it into the interview. Spouting out facts or prefacing a question with a lot of memorized details will not convince the employer of your interest and/or knowledge.

During the interview, most employers will ask some variation of, “Why do you want to work for our organization? or “What are your long-range career goals?” Relating your skills to those in the literature that seem to be needed for the position—or valued by the organization in general—can be an effective way to show that you’ve done your homework. Remember to bring in transferable skills like communications, writing, sales, or computer knowledge. Before the interview, brainstorm how you can help the employer be competitive in specified markets found through your research.

Another way to incorporate information is through the questions that you ask the employer, usually towards the end of the interview. Request information only on topics you really want to know more about, and avoid being too detailed or projecting a “know-it-all” attitude. Ask questions that encourage the employer to expand on information from the literature.
Employer research. Want to stand out in the job or internship application process? Do your research first! In order to represent yourself as a strong candidate during the job or internship application process, you must demonstrate knowledge of the industry, organization, and position to which you’re applying. For interviews, we also recommend you do your research on the people with whom you’ll be interviewing. Knowledge gained through careful research, if communicated properly